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"CIRCUMSTANCES."

The worst misfortune that ever be-

fel man, is the conceit that we are

born under particular stars, that there

is a fatalism in our destiny, and that

good or evil geni shape the course,

distribute the fortune of our lives. In

this pervading and over-mastering

idea lies the secret of the misery of

thousands in our midst, and every-

where around us. The notion is pre-

valent, vastly more than our philoso-

phers have dreamed, that no matter

how we exert ourselves, whether we

are honest, industrious, temperate or

religious, we can make no hold in the

world until we obtain our lot of luck.

The poor cry luck while they gaze up-

on the possessions of the rich, and the

idle echo luck, when their rags come

in contrast with the garments of the

thrifty.

The real causes of differences in

classes of society, and between the

tasks, enjoyments of individuals are

overlaid by the easier, more con-

soling exclamation, it is all luck. Sat-

isfied with this explanation, the beg-

gar, though stout of limb and able to

cast off his mendicancy, clings to his

staff, and accepts the charity of those

whom he calls the fortunate. Nor

the beggar alone, but men in all the

marts and professions of life, drag

themselves along, faint hearted, mis-

erable and murmuring against the ap-

parent evil destiny that denies to

them the prosperity, ease and luxury

of their neighbors. Professing to be-

lieve in Providence, they ascribe the

success of those whom they envy, but

will not imitate, to some stroke of

chance, and like the fabled steamer

whose cart ran into the ditch, cry,

"Help us Hercules!" without think-

ing of putting his own shoulder to the

wheel.

Fatal and delusive idea. There is

no such thing as luck in the aggregate

arrangements of conditions, no good

nor evil geni shaping our destiny,

nor no "particular star" full of bale-

ful or happy influences under which

we are born. If there are geni and

stars influencing us, they are in our

physical and mental constitution, and

the luck of the prosperous may be

traced to industry, shrewdness of cal-

culation, and a firm faith in the om-

nipotence of well used means; and

so, too, the ill luck of the thrifless

comes from the absence of these cre-

ative elements. It is libelling the wis-

dom and goodness of God to say that

these contrasts in human condition

are mere hap-hazard results.

Free society of mankind are its own

artifices, and it will be seen that God

has dispensed his gifts equally to all

and if one man has managed to con-

vert more earth, ocean, air, and their

good things to himself, than another

man, it is the work of that man's pro-

vidence, not God's distribution. The

houses and lands of the rich, if the

matter is sifted, have been accumulated

by intelligence and industry, upon a

fixed and immutable principle, while

the hovel and squalor of the poor are

THE LOTTERY FOR LIFE.

AN INCIDENT IN THE WAR OF MEXICAN
INDEPENDENCE.

The following thrilling narrative is

from a translation in Sharpe's Maga-

zine. A captain in the Mexican insur-

gent army is giving an account of a

meditated night attack upon a hacienda,

situated in the Cordilleras, and occupied

by a large force of Spanish soldiers.

After a variety of details, he continues:

Having arrived at the hacienda un-

perceived, thanks to the obscurity of a

moonless night, we came to a halt under

some large trees, at some distance from

the building, and I rode forward from

my troop in order to reconnoitre the

place. The hacienda, so far as I could

see in gliding across, formed a huge

massive parallelogram, strengthened by

enormous buttresses of hewn stone.

Along this chasm, the wall of the hacienda

almost formed the continuation of a

perpendicular one, chiseled by Nature

herself in the rocks, to the bot-

tom of which the eye could not pene-

trate, for the mists which incessantly

boiled up from below, did not allow it

to measure their awful depth. This

place was known in the country by the

name of "The Voladero."

I had explored all sides of the build-

ing, except this, when I know not what

scruple of military honor incited me to

continue my ride along the ravine,

which projected the rear of the hacienda.

Between the walls and the precipice,

there was a narrow pathway about

six feet wide; by day the passage would

have been dangerous, but by night it

was a perilous enterprise. The walls of

the farm took an extensive sweep; the

path crept around their entire base, and

to follow it to the end in the dark-

ness, (only two paces from the edge of

a perpendicular chasm,) was no very

easy task, even for as practised a horse-

man as myself. Nevertheless I did not

hesitate, but boldly urged my horse be-

tween the walls of the farm-house and

the abyss of the Voladero. I had got

over half the distance without accident,

when all of a sudden, my horse neighed

loudly. The neigh made me shudder.

I had reached a pass where the ground

was but just wide enough for the four

legs of a horse, and it was impossible to

retreat my steps.

"Hallo!" I exclaimed aloud, at the

risk of betraying myself,—which was

even less dangerous than encountering

a horseman in front of me on such a

road. "There is a Christian passing

along this ravine! keep back."

It was too late. At that moment a

man on horseback passed around one of

the buttresses which here and there ob-

structed this accursed pathway. He ad-

vanced toward me. I trembled in my

saddle; my forehead bathed in a cold

sweat. "For the love of God! can you

not return?" I exclaimed, terrified at

the fearful situation in which we both

were placed.

"Impossible!" replied the horseman,

in a low voice.

I recommended my soul to God. To

turn our horses round, to back them

along the path we had traversed, or even

to dismount from them, for want of room

were three seeming impossibilities,

which placed us both in the presence of

a fearful doom. Between two horse-

men so placed upon this fearful path,

had they been father and son, one of

them must inevitably become the prey

of the abyss. But a few seconds were

passed, and we were already face to

face—the unknown and myself.

Our horses were already head to head,

and their nostrils dilated with terror, mingled

together their fiery breathing. Both of

us halted in a dead silence. Above was

the smooth and lofty wall of the hacienda;

on the other side, but three feet

separated us from the precipice, and

below, the abyss of the Voladero.

"I see it so plainly," returned the

Colonel with alarming coolness, that I

should already have blown out the

brains of your horse, but for the fear

lest mine, in a moment of terror, should

precipitate me, with yourself to the bot-

tom of the abyss."

I remarked, in fact, that the Colonel

already held his pistol in his hand.

We both maintained almost profound

silence. Our horses felt the danger like

ourselves, and remained as immovable

as if their feet were nailed to the ground.

My excitement had entirely subsided.

"What are we going to do?" I deman-

ded of the Colonel.

He replied, "I have no other way

of escape for you, but to follow me."

"You are going to lead me to the bot-

tom of the abyss?"

"Yes, to the abyss," he replied, "but

not to the abyss of the Voladero."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean, that I have no other way

of escape for you, but to follow me."

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not to the abyss of the Voladero."

"Draw lots, which of the two shall

leap into the ravine."

It was in truth the sole means of re-

solving the difficulty. There are, nev-

ertheless, some precautions to take,"

said the Colonel. "He who shall be

condemned by the lot shall retire back-

ward. It will be but a feeble chance of

escape for him, I admit; but in short, it

is a chance, and especially so in favor

of the winner."

"You cling not to life, then?" I cried

cried out, terrified at the sang-froid

with which this proposition was put to

me.

"I cling to life more than yourself,"

sharply replied the Colonel, "for I have

a mortal outrage to avenge. But the

time is fast slipping away. Are you